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# **“Mundane Sights of Power: The History of Social Monitoring and its Subversion in Rwanda”**

Andrea Purdeková

**Abstract.** By tracing Rwandan state’s “*mundane sights*” – everyday forms of presence and monitoring – the paper sheds light on the historical development and striking continuities in ‘interactive surveillance’ across a century of turbulent political change. The paper considers three emblematic surveillance technologies— the *nyumbakumi* institution, the identity card, and *umuganda* works (and public activities more broadly)— which, despite their implication in genocide, were retained, reworked and even bolstered after the conflict ended. The paper investigates what drives the observed continuity and ‘layering’ of social monitoring over time, highlighting the key role ambiguity and ambivalence play in this process. The research expands the concept of political surveillance, moving away from the unidirectional notion of ‘forms of watching,’ and questions any easy distinctions between visibility and invisibility in the exercise of power or its subversion.

**Keywords.** surveillance; social monitoring; African state; Rwanda.

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## **1. Introduction**

The story of surveillance is rarely told in reference to Africa. Whilst it does not deny limits or subversion of state power,<sup>i</sup> surveillance is narrated from the angle of state presence, rather than absence, the latter of which is the more typical frame in political analyses of the continent. The story of surveillance is one that foregrounds formal institutions, bureaucracy and administration, systematic technologies and their historical roots, thus diverting focus from discussions of personalized relations and informal institutions that dominate debates and characterisations of African politics (Chabal and Daloz 1999, Bayart 1993, Jackson and Rosberg 1982). It connects to literature highlighting state resilience, ‘state survival’ (e.g. Titeca and deHerdt 2011) and state as a ‘constant frame’ (Nugent 2010) even in situations of weakness. The neo-patrimonial paradigm is slowly being complemented by studies focused squarely on bureaucracy (Bierschenk and Olivier de Sardan 2014), surveillance (McGregor 2013, Purdeková 2011a, Bozzini 2011), law and regulation (Piccolino 2013; Chalfin 2008) but more work both contemporary and historical is needed.

Surveillance and control could hardly be more intertwined than in the case of Rwanda where accounts of the 1994 genocide highlight state reach and oversight (Straus 2006, Mironko 2004, des Forges 1999), and where post-genocide studies paint a picture of strong state presence in the space of the everyday (Ingelaere 2014, Thomson 2013, Purdeková 2011a). Despite its importance, little is understood about surveillance in Rwanda historically and conceptually. How has surveillance developed over time? Has its intensity and nature changed over

time, in which ways, and why? What explains continuities despite appeals to (often revolutionary) political change and a 'break' with the past by Rwandan leaders? What is it about surveillance that allows it to be re-appropriated and elaborated time and again, even despite very negative deployment in genocide? How unique is Rwanda when set into a broader regional context?

The present paper offers a systematic historical tracing of surveillance in Rwanda, narrated through three emblematic technologies: the *nyumbakumi* local state representative (and administrative reach and density more broadly), the ID card (and identification, sorting systems more broadly) and finally *umuganda* community works (and responsabilisation and public participation more broadly). As will be shown, none of these technologies were in fact unique to Rwanda at the time of their inception or after, creating potential for a much broader comparative analysis.

The story of continuities and intensification is itself arresting. The paper will show that social monitoring developed in 'thrusts' rather than continuously, following changes in governance modalities and political economy of the state itself. Social monitoring is hence best understood through the trope of 'layering,' whereby technologies are added over time. The paper not only explains the intensification, it also reveals striking continuities across time despite appeals to change. Interestingly, the Rwandan state of today, when read through the lens surveillance, closely resembles its much-maligned predecessor—the 2<sup>nd</sup> Republic (1973- 1990) that ended in genocide.<sup>ii</sup> Post-genocide 'reconstruction' nonetheless created its own engine for intensifying social monitoring in new ways, as will be explored below.

On a broader theoretical level, the paper shows that discussions of visibility, seeing and being seen, are a rich window into understanding power and its subversion as they allow us to better grasp their complex and sometimes counter-intuitive nature. Whilst visibility is typically understood to be about 'ascertaining,' it is in fact ambiguity and ambivalence surrounding the surveillance project that help its replication and redeployment, and it is uncertainty and distrust that are its main outcome. On the other hand, as will be shown, subversion does not simply mean escaping overseeing but using and manipulating visibility. Simple dualities thus break down: Visibility and invisibility cannot be easily separated in the exercise of power, and neither can revelation and disguise.

## **2. Surveillance and the African State**

Surveillance as an academic topic is invariably bound with Western governance. Much less is known about the experiences of former colonies and post-colonial states, especially in Africa where the lack of historical analysis is most apparent. Exceptions here include Young and Turner's (1985) work on Zaire's 'Seventh Scourge- The Security Forces' or Schatzberg's (1988) work on 'The State as Ear,' exploring Zaire's *Centre National de Documentation* (CND)— the successor to the Belgian colonial *Sûreté*— and the environment of intimidation and fear it created through its local networks of informers. Similarly, Mahmood Mamdani (1983)

has explored the operation of the State Research Bureau (SRB) in Idi Amin's Uganda and its effective deployment of informers and intimidation. A small trickle of more recent studies turn away from the organs of the state to investigate local and everyday manifestations of surveillance at a particular historical juncture, from passbooks in apartheid South Africa to checkpoints in contemporary Eritrea (Breckenridge 2005a & 2005b, Bozzini 2011, see also Purdeková 2011a and McGregor 2013). Despite being few in number, the available studies do nonetheless offer a glimpse of the rich field of inquiry that remains largely untapped.

But the gap to be closed is conceptual, too. Unlike the works that precede it, the present study seeks to understand what drives the layering, intensification, redeployment and repurposing of 'mundane' surveillance technologies over the *longue durée*. A number of key questions emerge: How should we theorize surveillance in Africa if we want to carry out analysis across epochs, and one that does not begin with colonialism, and does not treat surveillance as an 'import' from the West? What drives the evolution of state surveillance over time? What explains continuities in social monitoring across a century of turbulent change, and despite experience of major atrocity abetted by it? Finally, how do we make sure that by foregrounding systems of 'capture' we do not overlook forms of escape?

The Rwandan state is unique in the context of Africa not only in terms of its control of the periphery, its vertical reach and the density of its structures (Purdeková 2015, 2011a; Ingelaere 2014) but also due the essentially indirect workings of its political power. Power works through 'subtle forms of intimidation' (Jessee 2013) and the state's embedding in the everyday. The present paper aims to contribute both to a better understanding of this indirect and subtle governance modality, and its development and transformation across time. Historical work on the Rwandan state has traced the gradual territorial extension of state control and elaboration of complex administrative and extractive systems (Vansina 2004, desForges 2011, Newbury 1988, Jefremovas 2002) placing much emphasis on the transformation and rigidification of ethnic identity, and the resulting entrenchment of inequalities, political exclusion and conflict over time (Jefremovas 2002, Thomson 2013). While ethnicity remains an important frame for understanding Rwanda's history, this paper shows that surveillance might tell us a key story of continuity that cuts across Hutu- and Tutsi-dominated epochs of Rwanda's political history.

Surveillance might invoke the notion of 'capture,' as in being caught up in the modes of state care and coercion. Yet existing empirical work (Kelly 2006, Jeganathan 2004, Bozzini 2011) qualifies the effectiveness of surveillance in reaching, sorting and identifying people. Further conceptual work can help us identify its limits. Surveillance here is not understood simply as 'forms of watching' but rather as a 'sphere of vision' where seeing is complemented by being seen, and where the latter — whether real or suspected — affects performance of those under state watch. 'Sphere of vision' here thus differs subtly but importantly from Foucault's 'sphere of visibility' (1975). Even as Foucault spoke of surveillance's decentering through individual embodiment of

the gaze and the resulting self-directed censure, his approach remains fundamentally one-sided. It has been criticized for offering little scope for resistance or co-authorship (only inasmuch as one imbibes the gaze). Yet what matters in the analysis of 'mundane sights' is not simply visibility as the scope and ability to oversee, but rather 'ways of seeing and being seen' which are their defining feature.

This framework is able to better capture the 'interactive' technologies that are the basis of this study. Interactive surveillance is one that fundamentally depends not only on 'presencing' of agents of state (or state-aligned or state-associated actors) but 'presenting' of token by those being surveilled, either in forms of cards and permits, information for censuses, taxation, displays of loyalty or a friendly roster, or attendance at meetings. In all of these interactions, there is scope for play and subversion. Yet the frame of interaction also begs some fundamental questions: Does interaction imply a balance of powers, outmaneuvering and 'impotence' (Mbembe 1992), or does the state still hold the upper hand? This will be studied through the exactions, duties, and emotive states that the Rwandan state is able (or unable) to extract with the help of its surveillance technologies.

This conception of surveillance also complicates simple divisions and opposition between visibility as capture and invisibility as a site of escape. Seeing does not easily translate into knowing. Visibility itself can produce mis-reading and be manipulated and subverted, not simply doctored. Invisibility, on the other hand, is not the exclusive domain of exit and escape. As will be shown, it often combines with surveillance itself in the exercise of state power. States can fudge, obfuscate, disappear, and they can reproduce themselves politically or economically through such manufacturing of the unseen (see e.g. Newbury 1984 on Zaire) or the haunting of the 'missing'.

The framework of 'mundane' sights captures the operation of state power in Rwanda particularly well but by the same token it diverges from modern surveillance studies focused on high-end electronic technologies, databases, biometrics, CCTVs and debates of the 'control society' or assemblages of vision operating across social arenas and geographical borders (Lyon 2007, Haggerty and Ericson 2000). The focus here lies squarely on 'interactive' technologies of surveillance, embedded in the flow of everyday life. Similarly, the focus here is not on special sites of surveillance such as the prison or paradigmatic tropes of the 'panopticon' (Foucault 1975) or 'banopticon' (Bigo 2005). Quite the opposite – what is of interest is the 'non-special,' the mundane and the everyday. Hence the chosen focus on local administrative 'overseeing,' ID cards and identification, and state-mandated public activities as ceremonies of being seen and posing for view.

Importantly, though the analysis that follows is anchored in specific technologies, the idea of 'mundane sights' is meant to capture a broader state of being. From a lived perspective, surveillance is a more generalised state and an overall effect of state presencing, and it is not reducible to or perceived as a 'set' of technologies or specific 'sites.' Today, Rwanda as 'surveillance state' is less a

geographic reference or a physical composite than a state of being, a community of affect.

The focus on everyday and ‘interactive’ technologies also indicates a very particular insertion into debates on African bureaucracy. Rather than looking at political economies of African bureaucracies as a whole (Berman 1984, Goldsmith 1999, Mamdani 1996, Heussler 1963, Olivier de Sardan 2014, among others), I am more interested in investigating ‘daily governance’ (Blundo and Meur 2009) and ‘street level bureaucracy’ (Lipsky 1980, in Olivier de Sardan 2009). The objective is not to unearth genealogies of state institutions in Rwanda, such as the security services. The analytical agenda is closer to, though not overlapping, with Olivier de Sardan’s call for the study of ‘real daily functioning,’ of ‘states at work’ (2004; 2014). The project is different because it does not offer a close-up study of bureaucrats at work. In fact, bureaucracy as a term invokes official posts and structures; the term much more appropriate to the study of surveillance in Rwanda is apparatus. The paper also focuses on the space ‘in-between’ where contact happens and vision gets fuzzy. The paper thus both outlines the local apparatus of surveillance, and demonstrates, at least in part, its interactive dimension— what and how is actually captured in and produced (politically speaking) through the sphere of vision.

Surveillance technology can be put to different uses by the state; hence change in surveillance is conceptualised here through the lens of the changing nature, tasks and roles of the Rwandan *Leta* (from *l’etat*).<sup>iii</sup> Continuity in surveillance, on the other hand, can be traced to the ambiguity that lies at its core. State surveillance can be narrated as either beneficial (as reaching to care) or harmful (as repression or oppression, as overreach). In the perspective of care, visibility is essential. That is why Lancet can speak of a ‘scandal of invisibility’ (Setel et al 2007): ‘absence of reliable data...is at the root of this scandal, which renders most of the world’s poor as unseen, uncountable, and hence uncounted.’ Invisibility here is read as a form of structural violence. At the same time, states, especially authoritarian states, often care as well as target, and can deploy visibility and monitoring as repressive strategies. The paper will show how the ambiguity of surveillance has allowed successive Rwandan governments to re-appropriate this state asset with ever-increasing vigor and despite its imbrications in a past of exploitation and violence.

### **3. Overseeing: Administrative Reach and Density**

The most striking story of social monitoring in Rwanda begins well before colonial rule. The story is one of surveillance as ‘overseeing’ of local life through administrative presence. The administrative structures of the Nyiginya kingdom (cca 1650- 1961)<sup>iv</sup> consolidated gradually, increasing both in geographical scope, local reach and complexity, and primarily served the purpose of extraction of corvée labor, the collection of *ikoro*— taxes, and cooptation of notables into the system through distribution of spheres of control. Historically, both seeing and being seen were key principles in the exercise and maintenance of central power. Then and now, ‘presencing’ rather than simply ‘overseeing’ has been an

important 'state effect' (Mitchell 1999), the central state's feedback loop of power.

Importantly, even at the height of pre-colonial expansion, the central court and its delegates were hardly 'all-seeing' and in many areas visibility was dispersed among small islands of control.<sup>v</sup> While 'Rwandan royal traditions portray an ancient, royal kingdom,' recent historiography rather focuses on the dynamics of patchy authority, gradual expansion, varied resistances and the 'shifting political field of constant negotiation and competing loyalties' that characterized the Rwandan court at the time of European contact (des Forges 2011: xxiii; see also Vansina 2004).

The presence of the state was uneven and authority 'varied from region to region, and sometimes hill to hill' (des Forges 2011:101). The kingdom was historically strongest in the central areas of today's Rwanda, expanded outwards through a set of military expeditions, and consolidated control over areas in the North only with the help of the European powers in the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Vansina 2004, Lemarchand 1966, Des Forges 2011). Full occupation was only achieved in 1931 (Reyntjens 1987).

The dynamic and uneven nature of state expansion should not detract from our study of administrative innovation and imposition, which were key to the successful (if uneven) consolidation of power. The style of centralisation was based on direct court appointments of local representatives and overlapping authority structures at the local level. The analysis here is then principally concerned with reach, density and style of administration and how these have evolved over time. This in turn will allow us to assess whether, and if so how, post-genocide Rwanda is unique in terms of administrative surveillance of local spaces.

In the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, expansion of the kingdom brought with it the development of new administrative norms. A series of three overlapping authority structures were established in each district under control – the *batware* (army leaders with powers over conscription and taxation), *banyabutaka* (responsible for land grants), and *banyamukenke* (responsible for pastureland)—all being delegates of the court, suppressing and replacing prior authorities— lineage heads or chiefs. The overlap assured a 'more complete court authority' and in addition, 'with each delegated authority *overseeing* the actions of his colleagues,' it also prevented any particular delegate from accumulating excessive power (des Forges 2011:7). 'Below this intermediary layer, power was delegated to the hill chiefs. [These] would in turn appoint a group of petty functionaries called *ibirongozi* (from Swahili: supervisors, overseers) to act as intermediaries' (Lemarchand 1966).

The reach of the state was thus intricate. To demonstrate this more clearly, it is estimated that before the arrival of the Europeans, there were about 80 district authorities, and a total of about 2,000-3,000 hill authorities in what is a rather small territory of Rwanda with a population of no more than 1-2 million in 1900. While the German colonizers left the pre-colonial administration largely intact,

the Belgians aimed for reform (Rumyia 1992). The Belgian administration reduced the number of local authorities between 1926-1932 in an attempt to simplify administration. Provinces and hills were regrouped and the 'trinity of chiefs' replaced with a single one. In 1932, there were 1,043 sub-chiefs with 343 tax-payers on average (Reyntjens 1987:78). In 1948, Rwanda was divided into 50 chiefdoms and 630 sub-chiefdoms (*sous-chefferies*) (Codere 1973). Biographies of chiefs (*abashefu*) and hill chiefs (*abasoushefu*) collected at the cusp of independence by Helen Codere show that the population overseen by each sub-chief was nonetheless still small. Sous-chef Ruhaniriza reminisces that in 1935 he has overseen 550 taxpayers in Nyarure, 'but that was more than at Ngarume where I only had 350 able bodied men [*Hommes Adultes Valides*]' (Codere 1973:20).

In daily life, it was these lowest authorities—the sub-chiefs and especially the *ibirongozi* or, in popular parlance, *umumotsi*—that had most presence (Mulinda 2010: 39). The *umumotsi's* 'popularity' was clearly expressed in the name itself, which derives from the verb *kumoka*—to bark. *Umumotsi* was a figure associated with orders and obligations—he called for obligatory meetings or *iperu* (a contortion of French *appel* - summons), collected prestations and taxes, called able bodied men to perform compulsory works (ibid). Ruhamiriza, a sous-chef at Ngarume between 1935 and 1940 describes his tasks: 'I collected taxes. I caused various crops to be cultivated. I assigned corvée work. I traced out roads. I did reforestation' (Codere 1973:58). While sous-chef Gasigwa speaks of his 'enormous popularity,' Mihana is clear that 'my subjects simply obeyed me out of fear. They worked hard but were malcontent' (ibid: 79). The biographies of sous-chiefs are filled with stories of local political intrigue and 'malice,' appointments and reappointments, easier and more difficult constituencies, but also speak clearly of a privileged class and an intricate, centralized political organization with clear presence in Rwandans' daily lives.

After independence, the rhetoric of the First Republic spoke of an 'absolute break' with the past of the 'feudal-colonial system' (Desrosiers 2014: 210). But it is precisely at this moment, when the political regime and the political class in power change profoundly, that continuities in terms of state become especially arresting. Despite administrative reform and different political functionaries (Hutu replacing most Tutsi), the reach of the state and the styles of its appropriation remain largely unchanged. The administrative structure and labor requisitioning are kept intact. Based on a decree from 25 December 1959, sub-chiefdoms become *communes* (municipalities), and chiefs are replaced by burgomasters (mayors). Yet 'upon assuming power, many burgomasters interpreted their role in pre-revolutionary terms' (Reyntjens 1987: 90) thus being complicit in partially restoring the very order they first hoped to destroy (Lemarchand 1966:318).

The state reached the pinnacle of intricacy after independence, under the Second Republic of Juvenal Habyarimana (1973-1990). The National Republican Movement for Democracy (MRND), a single party created in 1975, fused completely with state structures (Guichaoua 1989:145). The state was vertically integrated and organized hierarchically into prefectures, communes, sectors and



cells. The leadership made attempts to decentralize politics and services to the commune level, 'ensuring closer ties between the state and citizens,' though reach was far from perfect (Desrosiers 2014: 204).

Taking inspiration from socialist Tanzania, President Habyarimana instituted the *nyumbakumi* system in Rwanda—an informal system of unpaid authorities responsible for 10 houses. In Tanzania, the system was first instituted in 1964 and the *nyumba kumi kumi* served multiple purposes, the most important of which was checking and reporting on security and movement, collecting party dues, and mobilizing the population for development tasks, being in essence the lowest arm of the TANU (and later the CCM, Chama Cha Mapinduzi). It was these local *balizi* (lit. ambassadors) that were responsible for compliance with and execution of the *ujamaa* system. They were meant to be 'the eyes of the nation' (second Vice-President, quoted in Levine 1972: 330). In practice, their loyalties were often split and oversight over them imperfect (Cross 2013: 46).

In Rwanda, the function of the *nyumbakumi* was very similar—it was the lowest arm of the MRND, reported on security, movement and mobilized the population, which included supervision of *umuganda* community work. The *nyumbakumi* also had the power to fine people (HRW 1999). The new system had the meant effects of greater responsabilisation, greater visibility and compliance, and greater presencing of the state in daily life. *Nyumbakumi*'s intimate knowledge of the neighborhood, their tasks and their ability to draw lists contributed to Rwandans being 'eminently findable' (Scott 2006:215).

The *nyumbakumi* system poses interesting puzzles. Clearly, it is not unique to Rwanda, and so neither is the attempt at deep local state reach and surveillance. The *nyumbakumi* system itself has a longer genealogy, reaching to communist countries outside of the continent (Maoist China, Cuba, Cambodia, the latter had an equivalent called *dop khnongvi*) and has in turn inspired more countries in Africa than just Rwanda and Tanzania, including Burundi, Uganda, and most recently, Kenya. Nonetheless, the *nyumbakumi* has been always treated as a symbol of Rwandan state's penetrating reach, and the structures were implicated in the genocide (Mironko 2004, desForges 1999). So is Rwanda unique in terms of reach, and if so, how?

This is where political geography and the long history of local state presence comes into play, a legacy that cannot be reduced to the *nyumbakumi* but rather harks back to the *umumotsi* or the imposed Tutsi sous-chef of colline, a past of imposition, vertical integration and intricacy that countries such as Tanzania or Uganda do not share with Rwanda. When it comes to the genocide, state presence was an *indirect* contributing factor through the selective impositions and harsh extractions that it imposed. The nature of the state also affected the execution and form of mobilization during the genocide. The intricate hierarchical structure on a small geographical area helped unroll the project, again a factor not replicated in the neighboring countries, with the exception of Burundi (where the role of the local state structures in the 1972 genocide remains to be investigated).

The second puzzle concerns the continuity of local reach and the *nyumbakumi* institution after the genocide. The same institution aiding mobilization for the killing project became key in mobilizing local population for justice after the genocide (Nagy 2013:87; Thomson 2013:167). The *nyumbakumi* have also facilitated research into both of these topics (McDoom 2011). Perhaps rather than a puzzle, what this represents is the ambiguity at the heart of quotidian surveillance and state penetration more broadly. It is not inevitable that extraction always hides behind calls to ‘development’ or that repression always hides behind calls for increased ‘security.’ The continuous attraction of surveillance lies in the belief in its positive potential. People are caught up in the state’s modes of both coercion and care. Additionally, from the perspective of a government, the seduction of surveillance connects to its ability to ease governance. Finally, we know that governments infrequently muster the strength to oppose the “inertia of the state” (Stepputat and Hansen 2001: 29).

The powerful ambivalence to state presence was most recently reflected in Kenyan public debates surrounding the introduction of the *nyumbakumi* system. The suggestion to replicate the well-known system of local intelligence and control came in the wake of the Westgate Mall attacks of September 2013 and hence the call for localized security came at the back of profound insecurity. Analysis of recent press and blogging activity in 2014 quickly paints a picture of ambiguity and ambivalence—while some people post pictures of the Big Brother and speak of spies and unwelcome intrusion into private life, others excuse the costs as necessary trade-offs to assure greater security.

But while the power of ambiguity is key in upholding and deepening state reach and surveillance, this would perhaps be too quick of a dismissal of the topic, since in the case of Rwanda the state presence across epochs has been coercive and over-bearing, and continually (and more not less so after the genocide) excused with references to service provision and security. Both the developmental drive and securitisation have augmented after the genocide, leading to increasing state presencing and surveillance of daily life.

This is so despite the recent abolition of the *nyumbakumi*<sup>vii</sup> in 2006 and despite the fact that *umuganda* has been reduced to once-a-month obligation. The new lowest official administrative level today—village or *umudugudu*— is governed by an *umukuru*, who, with a committee of four, is responsible for 50 to 200 houses. At the next level up (the ‘cell’), the *responsable* oversees, with a committee of seven and 5 Local Defence Forces (LDF) personnel, about 500-1000 houses. The number of cells has remained virtually unchanged from before the genocide, despite two administrative restructurings in 2001 and 2006. The 2006 reforms decreased the number of higher-level units – provinces and districts— but significantly increased the number of the more localized sector offices, from 145 to 415.

Despite the restructuring, and as explored elsewhere (Ingelaere 2014, Purdeková 2011a and 2015), state presence has intensified after the genocide, in line with the new mode of governance set on wholesale social transformation. ‘Reconstruction’ in Rwanda has reached far beyond the physical realm as the

government asserts itself in attempts to securitise, re-educate and sensitise the population, both in the name of its developmental aspirations and in the name of its political struggle, to capture the hearts and minds and assure political consent. Politics and security interlock, both calling for intensified surveillance. In the name of uncovering 'genocide ideology,' 'divisionism' and 'terrorists,' and 'preventing' a future slide to physical violence, the government has tightened surveillance of local milieus and uses this oversight to crack down on opposition, real or perceived.

Surveillance in today's Rwanda is a tool of political control and repression to a greater extent than previously. The memory of the genocide is used to invoke and legitimize the need for greater securitisation of everyday life. In fact, public security has become an "all-encompassing indemnifier" (Nyst 2012), excusing further empowerment of police, army, and intelligence in Rwanda in their information-gathering roles. It has been used to argue in favor of the 2013 amendment to the 2008 Law Relating to the Interception of Communications, which further increases intrusion into private lives and the ability 'to listen and read private communications, both online and offline' (ibid). All communication providers are asked to implement state-acquired technologies such as keyword scanning. It is an 'open secret' that both email and phone communications in Rwanda are tracked. People certainly self-edit as if this were the case.

In the post-genocide era then, the platforms, responsibilities and obligations associated with the state have proliferated, in security (*amarondo* patrols, plain clothes police and ad-hoc information gathering), development ('special' *umuganda*, *ubudehe* schemes, *imihigo* contracts, sensitization sessions), politics (*imisanzu* or contributions), justice (attendance at *gacaca* hearings, acting as *inyangamugayo* judge). Importantly, the platforms cannot be reduced to the official manning of administrative posts. The true 'extent' of the state might be hard to gauge as it overflows its official structures into multiple responsibilities carried out on its behalf, some established (such as the *abakangurambaga* figures or *amarondo* patrols), others ad-hoc (such as when someone is tasked with 'keeping an eye' and reporting on the whereabouts of a person).

Naturally, the true extent of surveillance cannot be captured in a sum of formal and informal institutions and responsibilities, as it is more diffuse. The structure of information gathering certainly plays a role in creating a more generalized sense of 'being monitored.' As an informant told Susan Thomson in a life history interview 'there are a lot of people watching you, checking on your actions and the people you are with' (2013:123). Rwandans 'all know of state surveillance' (ibid: 124). 'Dense networks of spies are known to exist throughout Rwanda (and abroad) and the Department of Military Intelligence is rumored to pay for valid information' (ibid). The word 'spy' however might not capture the diversity of informer types, and the dynamics of often ad-hoc informants or people in a variety of functions asked to keep 'tabs,' to 'figure out' people (in this sense 'sorting' and categorizing political character- e.g. What does the person think of the government, is it a friend or foe)?

Researchers are not exempt from this dynamic and they too attract curiosity and careful observation. In my own experience, I have been asked to produce a list and schedule of interviews, and have been explained that if I do not produce a particular report reflecting on my stay, the government might think ‘there is something confidential [I am hiding].’ Like everyone else, I had to deploy my own wits and resources in interacting with surveillance, engaging but also subverting it at the same time. Once we focus on lived experiences of surveillance, we quickly see that studying structures, institutions, even systems is insufficient since surveillance works indirectly, inspiring anxiety, carefulness and an atmosphere of ‘quiet insecurity’ (Grant 2015). This is governance through social unease – an insecure government creating an insecure society, even if paradoxically through its techniques of ‘ascertaining.’

In sum, while the political history of Rwanda over the past century has been undoubtedly tumultuous, the intricate state administration stands out as a constant on the political landscape, repeatedly re-appropriated as a valuable asset by the reigning authorities of the land. While at the top, political change might seem profound, on the hills, state presence and its exactions form an important continuity. The presence of the state is a constant in the lives of common Rwandans.

During the pre-colonial and colonial times, the main tasks of the state were extractive and (later) ‘developmental’ though the two can hardly be dissociated as construction of roads or drying up of marshes itself depended on labor prestation. After independence, state presence and role extended to political ‘mobilisation’ of the population and to ‘checking’ of loyalties and leanings – whether it was checking of Parmehutu card ownership under the 1<sup>st</sup> Republic, or *kubohozza* political ‘liberation’ descents on households during the multi-party era of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Republic (1990-1994), or the checking of membership in the *umuryango* (family, ref. to the RPF party) today.

The pinnacle of conflation between the state and the political project was undoubtedly the genocide, where local state structures were directly implicated in the project. But yet again, the genocide should be read as a continuity rather than discontinuity. The call to participate was couched in the same terms as the exactions and public tasks of the state have been in previous decades—as communal labor, ‘special’ *umuganda*, as public work (*gukora, akazi* or *akazi gakomeye* – a big job) (Hintjens 1999: 268; Article 19 1996: 15).

The continuities in everyday state presence pre- and post-genocide are also striking (see also Thomson and Desrosiers 2011). This is especially so considering the stark change in the dominant class, its negative rhetorical attitude to the previous regime, and its emphasis on discontinuity, rupture and ‘rebirth’ of Rwanda. Yet the continuities appear time and again, being symbolised not only by the *nyumbakumi* (which was abolished only very recently), the *umuganda* community works, the *amarondo* (informal night patrols), the *animateurs* (re-named *abakangurambaga*) or more broadly, the continued conflation of party and state, but also the state’s developmental orientation, and as later sections will show, by the ID card and other forms of ever more

sophisticated civil registration, and various informal but state-initiated activities and forms of state appropriation of time, labor and loyalties. The continued and increasing state reach and presence, and hence visibility, can be explained by the ambiguity that surrounds them and that derives from the ability of the state and its “mundane sights” to present a face of both care and coercion, its ability to nurture life (as in healthcare outreach for example) or to suppress it (as in the genocide).

#### **4. Identification: Counting, Sorting, Tracing**

While forms of oral identification (and hence social ‘tracing’ and ‘placing’) existed in pre-colonial Rwanda (see e.g. Nyirubugara 2013), it was undoubtedly the colonial government that has devised and imprinted upon its colonies a distinct bureaucratic form of identification, where identification became standardised, identity legible in a particular way and actable-upon by the centralised state. Considering the prominence of the ID card in accounts of the implementation of the Rwandan genocide, it is striking how little is yet known and written about the purposes and actual colonial implementation of the census, the card or the passport.

The urge to sort, count and trace the Rwandan population came as a result of a wider colonial policy during the Belgian rule (1923-1962). In 1933, the official colonial bulletin (*Bulletin Officiel du Congo-Belge*) published a decree setting out the legal basis for identity cards in the Belgian Congo and ‘neighbouring colonies’ (referring to Ruanda-Urundi). It stated that all ‘indigenous’ subjects should register and would receive an identity card upon registration (*certificat d'identité* or *eenzelvigheisbewijs*). The decree did not offer specifications on the design of the card or the process of registration, these details being instead the prerogative of the governor of the two colonies (vanBrakel and vanKerckhoven 2014:8).

In Rwanda, the ID card or *indangamuntu* became best known for creating a fixed record of ethnic identity. Indeed, the very first item under the photo was *ubwoko* and the card offered four options— Hutu, Tutsi, Twa and Naturalisé—with the issuer crossing out options that did not apply. Nonetheless, it would perhaps be a history read backwards if we suggested that ethnic registration was the card’s primary aim. ‘Rather, registering ethnicity was merely one component of a broader program to increase the regulation of Belgian subjects’ (Longman 2001:353).

At the colonial twilight in the 1950s, Rwanda and Burundi had a ‘more or less well-functioning civil registration systems’ (Uvin 2002: 152) originally overseen by the Catholic Church. The identity cards were introduced together with other social monitoring mechanisms— a passport (*passport de mutation*, to regulate movement outside and inside the colonies) and a census (Reyntjens 1985). The politicised nature of ‘counting’ is easy to make out and Uvin (2002: 148) has shown ‘the extent to which this simple act [was] linked to dynamics of power and resistance in the region.’ Colonial counting was tied to taxation, and

repeated counting showing population growth was tied to legitimisation of the colonial enterprise, a token of its 'benefits.' The first full national door-to-door survey took place only in 1978 when 'for 24 hours, no citizen was allowed to leave home and throughout the country, a whole army of teachers and bureaucrats, accompanied by military personnel went house to house collecting data on 36 variables' (Uvin 2002:153).

Despite the meticulousness and effort expended, the visibilising technique of the census was used to hide unsavoury facts—power was sourced equally through visibility and invisibility. In both Burundi and Rwanda, major violent episodes and exodus of populations did not register on the census. In the case of Burundi, this was the 1972 genocide, estimated to have killed between 100,000 and 150,000 Hutu. In the case of Rwanda, it was the 1962/63 Tutsi purges that were secreted away, purges which precipitated the flight of between 40%-70% of the Tutsi population, most of which did not return until decades later. Censuses thus perhaps best show the fuzzy line between visibility and invisibility in the exercise of power, dissolving what is seen and what is hidden, shown and concealed into a 'zone of indistinction' (Agamben 1998).

What is significant is thus not only the institution of the card by the Belgians, but the subsequent decision by the post-colonial authorities to retain it. The ID cards gained a more explicit political character at the end of colonial rule when tensions in the country ran high. In the 'Hutu Manifesto' of March 24, 1957, the authorities expressed clearly that 'we are opposed vigorously, at least for the moment, to the suppression in the official or private identity papers of the mention of 'muhutu', 'mututsi', 'mutwa.' The suppression could create a risk of *preventing the statistical law from establishing the reality of facts* [i.e. the numerical dominance of the Hutu].'<sup>viii</sup>

The first<sup>ix</sup> President of Rwanda Gregoire Kayibanda kept the card and so did his successor Juvenal Habyarimana, whose death precipitated the genocide. In 1990, another time of political turmoil, the ID card again featured in political rhetoric, and this time its future was in question. At the turn of the decade, the government came under a mix of pressures. In October 1990, the exiled Tutsi-based RPF invaded Rwanda on a platform of ethnic unity. On November 13, 1990 under foreign pressure, Habyarimana announced a new multi-party system along with 'his intention, which he never acted upon, to abolish the ethnic identity cards' (Fussell 2004: 65). If read in its historical context, this perplexing promise is easily understood as a political manouever, political rhetoric adjusting to the political platform of the invading RPF, and a liberal concession to the international community, sending the expected signals.

Soon after the ID has been introduced by the colonial administration, the limits of registering identity became apparent. The *ingangamuntu* or in popular parlance *les pièces* (documents) became susceptible to the 'age-old faking and forging practices' prevalent elsewhere (Breckenridge 2005a: 98, writing on South Africa). Visibility is never a complete trap and one can in fact 'hide' behind visibility as we have seen with the census— here, however, the hiding was attempted by those subjected to the sorting and tracing exercise. The trends in

reclassification followed the changing political fortunes of different ethnic groups.

During the colonial period, a trade in ID cards developed and Hutu who wanted to gain better opportunities and could afford the purchase, reclassified as Tutsi 'generally through illicit means' (Longman 2001:353). Following the *muyaga*, the violent winds of the 1959 'Social Revolution' and the institution of the 1st Republic under Hutu majority rule, Tutsi fearing persecution or discrimination attempted to purchase new 'Hutu' identity cards. Successful re-classification was not automatic, however, and hinged on the knowledge embedded in the community. A successful assumption of a new identity was more likely for those who relocated elsewhere in Rwanda, and more likely for those moving to urban areas with greater possibility of anonymity.

After its use in the genocide, the ID cards together with the checkpoint became the emblems of a state and its bureaucracy turning against its own citizens, visibility and order enabling sorting for selective annihilation. Indeed, those who produced cards reading 'Tutsi' were usually executed immediately. At times, cards of victims were collected for accounting purposes, thus further highlighting the bureaucratic nature of the task (Fussell 2004). Captain Oldephonse Nizeyimana for example 'regularly received cards from his men as they reported on the progress of the killings[...] In the captain's absence, his wife received the cards' (ibid: rf 15).

Yet even during the genocide, people did not cease to invent ways to subvert the visibility imposed by the card, in fact using the document itself to escape death. One woman testified to have used methyl alcohol to erase the marks in the ID papers of her friend and to successfully reclassify her as 'Hutu' (Pottier 2004). In other instances, authorities themselves allegedly have used their power to issue false Hutu IDs and *laissez-passers*, as well as blank documents, and to make false entries in the *Registre des Résidents* to 'selectively' save a small number of Tutsi, even as they aided and abetted the broader project of genocide.<sup>x</sup>

Due to historical manipulation and forgery, the counterfeit ID was 'not so secret after all' (Nardone 2010)— IDs were not considered reliable and were not fully trusted as indexes of difference. The label 'Hutu' was not a salvation. Its worth was eroded and it became harder to hide within the visible. The preoccupation with wiping out a whole category of people meant that *ibiymanyi* (hybrids) and *abaguze ubwoko* (ethnic cheaters) were also targeted (Eltringham 2004). The latter term was in use already in 1973, but categorical purity became a true preoccupation at the extremist Kangura newspaper at the beginning of the 1990s (Chretien 1995:102). In the November 1990 edition (no4: pp20-21), an author asked rhetorically: 'A person that adopts an ethnic identity, which is not that of their birth and who carries the supporting documents, is this not a species with two heads (*espèce à deux têtes*)?' The allusion was to a burrowing snake known as *ikirumirahabiri*, an image used to characterize ambiguous persons, and in political context meaning a 'double agent.'<sup>xi</sup>

As a result, alternative ways of identification were deployed by the killers, most prominently 'body maps' (Malkki 1995) or rumored narratives of 'real origin' – histories of migration and subsequent re-classification. Small children did not carry ID cards and, when wondering alone, were better able to hide and pass through roadblocks. However, 'survival often depended entirely on the decisions made by the individual militia on the roadblock. "I passed a roadblock and the men looked at the lines on the palms of my hands, they decided that the lines did not show that I was a Tutsi and so I was allowed to pass" (Bleach 2009:69). More generally, those officially classified as Hutu but who looked Tutsi were targeted.

Playing off the symbolism of the 'deadly' ethnic ID card, the post-genocide government instituted a new de-ethnicised *indangamuntu* in 1996, which soon came to be read as a symbol of the nation-building effort. The underlying issue – registration and its facilitation of tracing, sorting and targeting— was never problematized in itself. In fact, the system of identification became much stronger than previously. In 2009, new digital ID cards were released and the brand-new National Identification Agency (NIDA) (established in 2011) has now issued cards to 80% of the population using biometric information (WB 2014:3). The government is considering issuing identification for children (ibid).

Not only was ethnicity treated as the key issue at stake, its lack was seen as truly emblematic, symbolically potent—the state might not have been changed structurally but rather recaptured for the purpose of benevolent 'care.' 'De-ethnicisation' became a powerful legitimator in upholding state 'reading' and tracing for biopolitical ends, reaching in the name of fostering wellbeing and national development. The census no longer tracked ethnicity, and neither did any official documents. Nonetheless, this hardly spelled an end to 'ethnic tracing' as age-old and new alternatives continue to be deployed, including 'body maps,' family names and personal information on CVs.<sup>xii</sup> Similarly, the new ID card did not signal an end to official social sorting and implicit ethnicisation (Burnet 2012). Importantly though, ethnicity post-genocide is not the key category to be 'sorted' out by those in power. Today, it is political sorting that is most important, and to this end cards and registers have to be complemented by other forms of information tracing explored in the sections below and above.

Just as during colonial times, the *indangamuntu* came to be complemented by other cards such as the *umuganda* card, the *mutuelle de santé* card (health insurance) or the *Umurenge Sacco* cards (savings collective). All of these serve as a mechanism to oversee compliance – participation in state-mandated activities— and as a control mechanism— a prerequisite to obtaining other permits and favors from the local authorities (Purdeková 2015). The most potent of these mechanisms, however, are the *imihigo* contracts. Introduced in 2006, *imihigo* is an annual pledge of accomplishment of specific development goals signed at all administrative levels, all the way down to the level of the household (see Purdeková 2011a and Chemouni 2014). In theory, the *imihigo* objectives stem from local priorities, but in practice they are guided from the top. The district *imihigo* are elaborate, and comprise around 40 indicators, thus 'leaving few activities for which planning is not reviewed by the centre. In addition,



ministries regularly keep an eye on districts through regular “descents” of their agents deployed locally’ (Chemouni 2014:249). But *imihigo* is not immune of subversion, even amongst those ‘overseeing’ its implementation at the local level. While officials lament that *imihigo* ‘“is killing us, no one can escape it”, [they] may resort to data falsification to reach their objectives’ (ibid: 250).

Importantly, the Rwandan state has made significant strides in integrating these diverse ‘pieces’ of identification and monitoring. In a recent development, NIDA has introduced and in 2014 started issuing ‘smart ID cards’ which now collate a wide array of information into one document. As opposed to the national ID, which is required for all Rwandans aged 16 and above, the ‘smart ID’ is optional. The ID integrates seven identification features, including ‘personal identification, details of driving license, passport, family dependants/members, social security (RSSB), health insurance and a tax identification number.’<sup>xiii</sup> This new technology rapidly ‘decreases the time they [the government] use[s] to access the citizen’s full identification.’<sup>xiv</sup>

To conclude, the Rwandan ID card was a product of the colonial period and was undoubtedly seen at the time as a modern and universalised system of state control, with all the ambiguities that the technology implies. The ID card is thus a good example of a piece of a wider surveillance ‘assemblage’ (Haggerty and Ericson 2000)—a collection of pieces that can be assembled and appropriated for an array of purposes. It is one technology among others that can be configured as part of a broader, transitory constellation of control—of paperwork, data, population registers and census results, of tracing, sorting and checking systems. It is both tangible as a collage of objects, sites and moments of interaction, and more intangible as a general sense, an affective state.

The analysis of IDs and identification again highlights the role of ambiguity in driving continuity and re-application. Since the Rwandan colonial period, the card too presents an interesting continuity across a turbulent political discontinuity, and is deployed in Rwanda to this day. Undoubtedly though, the thickness of social monitoring has increased post-genocide, with old (or ‘renewed’) forms being accompanied by new forms such as *imihigo* contracts (though these too are rhetorically anchored in the ‘traditional’ past; see Purdeková 2011a and Chemouni 2014). Crucially, the analysis unworks any easy distinctions between visibility as a space of state power and invisibility as a space of subversion, showing that it is indeed possible for the state and its citizens alike to ‘hide’ within the visible.

## **5. The Public Show: Activities, Ceremoniousness and Commensality**

Post-colonial Rwanda came to reproduce the legacy of ‘close public scrutiny of all spheres of life’ through a ‘network of controls’ (Hintjens 1999: 245). But the Second Republic of Juvenal Habyarimana (1973-1994) marks a further intensification. Rwanda became a developmental state (Verwimp 2013) that ‘stirred the hillsides’ (deLame 2004: 295). “‘Projects” of all kinds gradually spread across the countryside’ (ibid) and the state brought people further out

into the public sphere – and thus sphere of vision— through multiple new state activities, including *umuganda* public works, public feasts and animation sessions— a style and repertoire kept and elaborated to this day.

If the previous sections explored the ambiguity of surveillance, the resulting ambivalence felt towards it, and the confluence of visibility and invisibility in the exercise of power through the tropes of reach and tracing, this last section focuses on display and disguise as epitomized by public interaction, by *umuganda* Saturdays or communal feasting occasions. These public platforms of obligatory, ceremonious, ostentatious ‘togetherness’ perhaps best demonstrate the state of ‘mutual deception’ between citizens and the state, and a mutual ‘disarming’ through pretense in public spaces.

The approach in this section further complicates surveillance as ‘seeing’ by investigating the public sphere as a sphere of vision where both sides arrange and frame themselves in response to the other, resulting in mutual deception and, potentially, a ‘crisis of transparency’ (deLame 2004). From this perspective, it is both the state representatives and state’s subjects that are ‘watching each other.’ Crucially, this too is surveillance as the different actors carefully observe each other, and ‘dress’ for each other. There are three implications that flow from this. First, seeing is always also reading (as in ‘decoding’), yet greater seeing does not automatically translate into more accurate reading. Second, and connected to this is the observation that what matters is not only that one is seen but that one is seen *as*. Framing can then be manipulated from above, but also from below.

Lastly, ‘revealing and concealing,’ as deLame observed (2004: 305) ‘are two ways of playing on the same keys, of escaping any definition of one’s position vis-à-vis society.’ Indeed, when it comes to the public sphere, display and disguise again enter into a state of indistinction, and the act is perhaps better understood through the tropes of framing and ‘presentation of self’ (Goffman 1959). From above, the dramatic (dis)play is one of a caring state, from below— of a loyal subject.

The developmental drive under Habyarimana’s leadership led to the institution of multiple new public activities and new ways and manners of state manifestation in people’s lives. On February 2, 1974, Habyarimana asked every Rwandan to perform ‘voluntary’ community work for half a day on Saturday each week. Taking inspiration from Tanzania’s *ujamaa* and Zaire’s Authenticité and *salongo* (public works instituted in 1973), Habyarimana anchored the practice rhetorically in Rwanda’s own pre-colonial past of communalism. ‘Umuganda’ was the traditional stamp on what was otherwise known as ‘Collective Works for Development.’

But this was not all. To *umuganda* should be added public feasts and exaltations of the regime, weekly animation sessions (*séances d’animation*), public celebrations, sensitization sessions, and stylized gift exchange ceremonies (*amaturu*). Animation groups were organized at cell level for the purposes of political mobilization and met weekly. For the *abaturage* (people) the animation

sessions of song, dance and sensitization took place after *umuganda*. State employees on the other hand met for get-togethers every Wednesday afternoon 'to practice chants and skits in celebration of the Rwandan state, its overthrow of the Tutsi monarchy, and its rejection of the *ubuhake* cattle contract signifying Hutu servitude to Tutsi, and most of all to honor the country's President' (Taylor 2005). These employee groups were also organized as *cellules* (and thus integrated as separate political parcels of the *mouvement*) and were sometimes called *groupes de choc*. They would perform publicly on national holidays, competing against each other in their official exaltation of the regime (Taylor 2002: 143). The voice of the President was also broadcast for five minutes every day. What resulted was a denser interaction between people and the state. For example, in 1985 'the population of the commune has participated on average in four cell meetings and six sector meeting. To this should be added 52 days of *umuganda* and 52 animation sessions. Together, this amounted to in theory to 118 encounters between the population and the authorities. ...This number does not take into account ad hoc sensitization and information meetings. Finally, one also has to add official celebrations to this.'<sup>xv</sup>

DeLame (2004) argues that the ostentation characteristic of the Second Republic and visible in activities such as *umuganda* served the purpose of show— 'they were highly visible in organization, but not in output' (2004:289). The ceremoniousness was meant to have symbolic and metonymic power, both reflecting political power and hoping to enact what was being represented. Similarly, Ranck has argued that the key aspect of public interaction under the Second Republic was performative, it was all about 'the spectacle of the state' (Ranck 2000:193).

Conversely, Phillip Verwimp (2000 & 2013) has painted *umuganda* squarely as exaction and direct tax. *Umuganda* made an 'enormous amount of unpaid labor available to the state' (ibid 2000:27). Despite inefficiencies and evasion, there were physical testaments to *umuganda*'s output throughout Rwanda. Among other things, 145 identical commune offices were built in every commune during *umuganda*, and hundreds of kilometers of anti-erosion ditches (Verwimp 2013: 8). It is hence perhaps best to say that both show and real extraction defined and define *umuganda* and other public activities to this day. The aspect of show is perhaps even more important today than before. *Umuganda* as well as other public activities, meetings and celebrations bringing people 'together' are presented as tools for community healing and as nation-building tools.

Yet again, the continuities across the landmark of genocide are striking—both in the developmental disposition of the state and the style of 'public togetherness' and ceremoniality promoted. The term *animation* has been dropped and in its stead there is the ever-present 'sensitisation.' *Umuganda* has been reintroduced in 1998 along with the post-*umuganda* meetings and *ubusabane* community festivals. The exigencies of reconstruction, development and reconciliation have however called for the introduction of additional platforms of public 'communality,' such as the *ubusabane* community 'feasts,' commemorative activities, and special public holidays such as Heroes Day. To community works have also been added community justice responsibilities in *gacaca* courts (which

have recently finished their work), policing and security responsibilities, multiple unity and reconciliation activities organized under the aegis of the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission (NURC), ceremonious football matches, among others.

The post-genocide era also saw the introduction of completely new platforms of communality. The vast 'civic education' exercise is perhaps the most important of them. Civic education commenced first through selective targeting under the *ingando* program (see Purdeková 2015, Thomson 2011, Melvin 2013) where hundreds of Rwandans at a time spent weeks or months in camps in different parts of the country, receiving lessons on history, politics and policies of the government, military training and lessons in 'traditional' Rwandan culture. More recently, civic education was 'decentralised' and extended to the general population under the program of *Itorero ry'Igihugu* (The National Academy). Participation in civic education camps is mandatory and all participants receive a certificate of attendance upon graduation. In this case, the certificate serves as a way to check and identify compliance and hence potential dissent. A university student must present their *ingando* certificate to graduate, while government-sponsored university students must produce the *intore/ingando* certificate to gain entry to university.

The aspects of mutual play are clearly present in all of these activities. 'Being seen' is used in ways that can both acclaim and undermine the official. Being seen refers to attendance or token compliance, which can score credit or at least avoid cost (e.g. fines). What often results are surface-level acts that speak simultaneously of acquiescence and 'hollowing out' of activities from within (Purdeková 2015). 'The most important thing is to be there [at *umuganda*],' told me one of my informants in Kigali earnestly. Indeed, when most important aspect of a public activity becomes 'being seen' doing something, effort diminishes and often becomes perfunctory. But subversion can also happen by appropriating and playing with words such as when saying that one participates in public works by 'cleaning their living room.' The score of indirect and non-confrontational ways in which ordinary Rwandans subvert public performances while upholding them on the surface through token or irreverent compliance has been recently documented by Susan Thomson (2013).

If public voice is policed and rehearsed, then power is often reclaimed by people through silence (Burnet 2012; Thomson 2013; Rettig 2008). Purposeful silence is both a strategy against 'reading' and undermining of surveillance, as it is a powerful message of distance or disagreement even in the face of an intimate encirclement by the state.

But it is not only 'being seen' that is a space of play and maneuver, but equally 'being seen as.' Both are plays of appearance, but while the first relates more to 'making an appearance,' the latter is more about 'managing an appearance.' The two nonetheless are closely related. The purpose of political surveillance often is to ascertain loyalties and leanings. Being 'seen as' thus refers to maneuvering in order to frame oneself in profitable ways or to avoid being framed in costly ways, essentially of appearing as a friend, or at least not as an enemy. The latter

dynamic is what McGregor (2013) described in the context of today's Zimbabwe as 'being watched and the risks of being seen as a traitor.'

In Rwanda, the salience of political framing and the stakes involved increased with the civil war (1990-1994) and later the genocide, but continue to be salient to this day. The terms of 'inspection' might have changed, but the intense use of surveillance to ascertain a political profile have not. During the civil war and later genocide, the key term was *ibytso*— accomplice of the invading RPF (predominantly Tutsi), a term as abusable as it was expandable (and expanded to equate Tutsi with enemy or *inyangarwanda*; Straus 2006; Purdeková 2009). Today, the terms of inspection have changed—the talk is of divisionists, people with genocide ideology, and more recently terrorists— but the continuity lies in the search and identification of internal and external enemies. It is this 'inspection mode' that contributes to further securitisation and increased surveillance in post-genocide Rwanda. The resultant fomenting of uncertainty is reflected in public appeals to vigilance— '*banyarwanda basabwa kuba maso*' – Rwandans are asked to be vigilant (literally 'to be eyes').

## 6. Conclusions

The recent controversy over the arrest of Rwanda's spy chief and head of the National Intelligence and Security Services (NISS) Karenzi Karake at Heathrow in June 2015 revealed a powerful paradox. Karake was allegedly visiting the UK to meet the head of MI6 when he was arrested under a European Arrest Warrant on accusations of war crimes. Soon after, however, Karake was released on bail worth one million pounds. The headlines' exclusive focus on the Rwandan figurehead and the organization he represented missed a broader story. Namely, that those 'paying' for the release, literally, were meant to be Rwandans themselves. The same system of surveillance assuring control also assures extraction of 'contributions' at the local level (see Purdeková 2011a on *imisanzu*). In the summer of 2015, Rwandans were asked to spare a pound for the 'Ishema Ryacu Campaign' ('Our Pride') so that their spy chief could be spared from justice. In this manner, power literally sought to bail itself out. Importantly, it did this through its local and everyday operation, its presence and reach. The anecdote thus digs to the core of Rwanda's indirect state of domination— it is not Karake or the organization that he presides over that hold the key to deciphering control and governance in his country, it is the local embedding of the state and its extractive apparatus.

The history of Rwandan state's 'mundane sights' is an intriguing one. Over time the Rwandan state and its oversight structures increased both in extension and intensity. There were numerous points of intensification across time, and colonialism presents but one relevant historical juncture. The three sections have tried to demonstrate the nature of 'layering' that has occurred as the state expanded its reach. The paper has also demonstrated and tried to explain the striking continuities across historical epochs, despite their claims to forming decisive breaks with the past, even revolution. The deep structures of power— as represented in technologies of surveillance or the presence of the state in the

local milieu—have remained largely intact. Instead, it is their uses that have shifted, multiplied and the platforms that have proliferated.

The paper has analysed three emblematic technologies of surveillance. Yet as we have seen, none of these was or is unique to Rwanda. The ID card was introduced in all Belgian colonies. The *nyumbakumi* was a post-colonial inspiration from socialist Tanzania that continues to inspire countries in the region. The animation sessions and communal works were similarly present in neighboring countries such as Burundi. The introduction of specific technologies thus has a limited capacity to explain their particularly intense and impacting use in Rwanda.

The analysis shows that in order to understand the intensity of administrative surveillance and presence, it is best to combine the analysis of political geography, the reach of state structures, with vertical integration (the capture of the state by a particular party is key here) and intensity of use. From this vantage point, what matters is not only that the local presence of today's state has deep historical roots, but also that additional layers of objectives have added further layers of use and intensity to local state structures over time. As mentioned, extractive, accommodative and developmental uses have been later accompanied by political mobilization at the grassroots.

After the genocide, securitisation, reconstruction, education and re-education, politicization and mobilization have arguably produced a more intense state presence in daily life despite nominal 'easing' in specific domains (e.g. *umuganda*). Paradoxically, it is the genocide that itself provided the impetus for further intensification. The prerogatives of securitisation, reconstruction, developmentalism had an important role to play, along with other facts—the continued conflation between the state and the party.

As shown throughout the paper, social monitoring is a rich terrain to read for agency and subversion. But while people surely 'are in a constant process of manipulating the measurements and categories to which they are subjected' (Uvin 2002:169), social surveillance is always ultimately a project geared to manage society, making inroads in the name of care and control, order and security. The ambiguity surrounding visibility and vigilance, is *janus* face of both ferocity and benevolence is at play in Rwanda as elsewhere, helping the state structure remain largely intact after being implicated in mass violence, and gaining further in strength.

The legitimacy of surveillance is key and depends on the precarious balance that needs to be struck between state 'reach and overreach' (Ingelaere 2014), as well as the importance of historical memories and narratives that inform the perception of state presence and overseeing—the fraught histories of forced extraction and obligation, the political motives driving responsabilisation and vigilance. The RPF-led state is arguably navigating a tight line between care and repression in its uses of surveillance technologies today. Despite the powerful developmentalist rhetoric and legitimate claims to extension of 'caring' reach, the current government does not effectuate a break with the images and felt

realities of a demanding and extractive central state of the past, quite the opposite.

Is Rwanda unique? As highlighted, Rwanda is not exceptional in terms of application of particular technologies and yet it is in Rwanda where all of these and more have been put to most effective and intense use. Political geography, in addition to factors mentioned above, certainly forms part of the answer. But looking at a country with very similar political geography— Burundi— which has also instituted similar oversight systems, it is clear that this cannot be the full explanation. Those who have carried out fieldwork in both countries quickly note that ‘the Rwandan government dominates the social and economic lives of its citizens in ways that far exceed neighboring Burundi’ (Sommers and Uvin 2011).

What explains that similar institutions and technologies achieve different effects across countries? And are ‘mundane sights’ of the state deployed equally effectively for the purposes of violence as for biopolitical ends of care, or aims of social transformation? How do we best conceptualise the trade-offs between reach and over-reach? Further analytical work and comparative study are needed if we are to answer questions about differential implementation and impact. The current study has hoped to stimulate interest in such questions. By tracing inspirations and parallels to different surveillance technologies elsewhere in the region, it has attempted to highlight the importance and feasibility of a wider historical and comparative research into political surveillance and social monitoring in Africa.

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<sup>i</sup> The paper starts with but ultimately interrogates and qualifies Michel Foucault's powerful linkage, 'the central role of visibility in his understanding of power and control' (Gordon 2002:129). To clarify key terms from the outset, surveillance here refers to state-organized systems, structures and sites enabling the purposeful observation of people for a diversity of purposes, only one among which might be repressive control. In the broadest sense, surveillance and monitoring make 'society' as a space of state intervention possible. Social monitoring as used here overlaps with surveillance to a large extent, but is more specific and refers to active observation with the aim of sorting, categorizing and extracting crucial data on identities, loyalties, compliance, and more. There is a complex causal relation between state reach and control on the one hand, and surveillance on the other; the relationship is not unidirectional.

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Physical reach and extension of the state enables and intensifies surveillance, which in turn increases state 'reach' as intrusion as well as social control.

ii Desrosiers and Thomson (2011) also demonstrate powerful continuities between the regimes of Juvénal Habyarimana and Paul Kagame, looking specifically at rhetorical legacies and the projections of 'benevolent leadership' through which these regimes built internal control and international legitimacy.

iii This change in turn depends on key factors such as the nature of the regime and form of government and their ability and need to capture political space (mass mobilisation, reading of loyalties), political ideology (e.g. developmentalism), political geography (ease of reach and oversight) and stability (securitisation; 'social hyper-vigilance,' Vigh 2011; shoring-up of certainty in uncertain times, Appadurai 2002).

iv This is Jan Vansina's chronology, which carefully revisits earlier estimates (see Vansina 2004).

v so much so that in certain places court representatives 'chose their routes carefully and armed themselves well before setting out' (Des Forges 2011:101)

vi See Cook (2004) for reference.

vii The level of *nyumbakumi* does not allegedly exist anymore though lower-level structures are in place and sometimes might even be still referred to as '*nyumbakumi*' (HRW 2012; Baker 2007).

viii as cited in Fussell (2004:64)

ix Technically, the first (provisional) President was Dominique Mbonyumutwa but his term in office was very short (less than a year).

x This comes out of a number of the ICTR hearings and obviously needs to be treated with extreme caution as evidence. See e.g. transcript of Case No. ICTR-95-1A, Trial Chamber I.

xi Chretien (1995: 102) discusses this with regards to the Kangura excerpt. For a much more recent political use of the term, read a September 2014 article entitled 'Who Is Monique Mujawamariya, Accused Of Forming Rwanda Terror Cell?'

(<http://www.newsofrwanda.com/abanyapolitiki/24964/who-is-monique-mujawamariya-accused-of-forming-rwanda-terror-cell/>)

xii This comes out from my own fieldwork, and is also briefly mentioned in Nyirubugara (2013).

xiii <http://allafrica.com/stories/201407211727.html>

xiv <http://www.biztechafrika.com/article/minister-youth-and-ict-visits-national-identificat/5275/#.VY299qUXzwI>

xv Kimonyo, Rwanda, Un Genocide Populaire (2008:261).